



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
OFFICE OF MARINE AND AVIATION OPERATIONS
COMMISSIONED PERSONNEL CENTER
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-32B2

MEMORANDUM FOR: Rear Admiral Nancy L. Hann, NOAA
Director, NOAA Corps

FROM: Rear Admiral (Lower Half) Chad M. Cary, NOAA
Acting Director, Commissioned Personnel Center

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2023 Officer Corps Management Plan

PURPOSE:

The Officer Corps Management Plan (OCMP) is an annual plan that assists with management of the NOAA Corps workforce by identifying officers within each grade that are eligible for promotion. The Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) OCMP provides officer promotion recommendations based on a projection of planned officer accessions and attritions, as well as current NOAA-wide service needs. The OCMP serves as an execution plan to initiate the NOAA Corps promotion process.

OVERVIEW:

The Commissioned Personnel Center (CPC) develops the annual OCMP by analyzing on-board workforce strength, attrition trends and forecasts, and accessions required to maintain the commissioned officer workforce in the context of NOAA-wide mission needs. The OCMP enables the Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO) to maintain the NOAA Corps at the level needed to fulfill NOAA program requirements and legal requirements governing the NOAA Corps workforce.

There are three steps to the officer promotion process: eligibility, selection, and promotion. Each step is controlled by laws, regulations, and administrative procedures. The promotion process for the NOAA Corps is described in NOAA Corps Directive (NCD) Chapter 4, Part 2.

- 1) Eligibility - Eligibility for promotion to each grade is provided in NCD Chapter 4, Part 3. The *critical* elements considered in determining promotion eligibility are: 1) completion of required training; 2) time-in-grade (TIG, Table 1 below); and 3) medical qualification.

Table 1 - Required Time-in-Grade for Promotion	
Captain (O-6)	Four years in the permanent grade of commander
Commander (O-5)	Four years in the permanent grade of lieutenant commander
Lieutenant Commander (O-4)	Three years in the permanent grade of lieutenant
Lieutenant (O-3)	Two years in the permanent grade of lieutenant (junior grade)
Lieutenant (junior grade) (O-2)	No TIG requirement

- 2) Selection – A range, or zone, of officers on the lineal list eligible for selection is evaluated for promotion by an Officer Personnel Board (OPB). Officers are considered to be "in zone" if they meet eligibility requirements, have not failed more than once to be selected for promotion, and do not have an approved voluntary retirement or resignation. The zone size considers the number of vacancies in each rank, the number of officers eligible for selection, the time required to promote selected officers to fill known and estimated vacancies, and the officer strength required to fulfill NOAA-wide mission needs.

- 3) Promotion - Following selection for promotion, officers may have their promotion effectuated from two to six months after notification of selection. During years of low attrition, the promotion process may take longer. Ultimately, the timing of promotion is dependent on actual vacancies, promotion approval processes, and the officer strength required to meet NOAA-wide mission needs.

DEFINITIONS:

Authorized Strength: Public Law No: 116-259 – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Officer Corps Amendments Act of 2020 authorized an increase in the number of commissioned officers from 321 to 500 (33 U.S.C. § 3005). Flag officers are not included in determining the authorized strength.

Accession: Accession is the increase in strength through bringing new officers into the NOAA Corps via Basic Officer Training Class (BOTC), Inter-Service Transfer (IST), or direct commission.

Attrition: Attrition is any retirement, death, resignation, or separation of a member from the NOAA Corps. Attrition rates are calculated annually using the number of officers that detach from the NOAA Corps and the average annual strength (AAS). Attrition creates vacancies in the respective grades and affects the actual number of NOAA Corps promotions effectuated in a given year. Table 2 shows historical attrition rates by grade for the four previous years.

Table 2 - Historical Attrition and Percentage Rates by Grade						
	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	Average	*% Average
O-6	3	6	1	2	3	12.1%
O-5	2	8	3	4	4	17.2%
O-4	5	2	2	4	3	13.1%
O-3	13	7	5	7	8	32.3%
O-2	2	0	7	3	3	12.1%
O-1	4	1	2	6	3	13.1%
TOTAL	28	24	20	26	25	100.0%
Overall % Attrition	8.5%	9.1%	7.5%	6.1%	7.7%	*% Average based on four years; FY19-22
Avg. Annual Strength	317	319	327	328	322.57	
Note: Does not include officers recalled from retirement. Averages in each grade are rounded to the nearest whole number.						

Average Annual Strength (AAS): The average number of officers on active duty in the NOAA Corps over a given fiscal year. The OCMP is planned using the AAS.

Cohort: A grouping of officers in sequential order on the lineal list that share identical or similar time-in-grade and/or total years of service.

Control Grade Distribution by Law: Pursuant to 33 U.S.C. § 3004, the Secretary shall prescribe, with respect to the distribution on the lineal list in grade and not less frequently than once each year a computation to determine the number of officers on the lineal list authorized to be serving in each grade and set the grade distribution. Table 3 is the recommended grade distribution percentages for FY2023.

Table 3 – Recommended Grade Distribution of Officers		
Grade	Percentage Recommendation	Number of Officers
O-6	8%	26
O-5	14%	46
O-4	20%	66
O-3	22%	73
O-2	18%	60
O-1*	18%	60
Total	100%	331
* The number of officers in each grade rounds to the nearest whole number.		

Vacancies: The planned vacancies are based on the attrition rate per grade over the four previous

years, approved detachment dates of known attritions, and planned promotion of officers to the next grade.

Opportunity of Selection (OOS): To meet Service needs, the Director of the NOAA Corps has the authority to adjust the OOS annually.

Table 4 - Opportunity of Selection	
To Grade	Percent Opportunity
O-6	Determined annually
O-5	Determined annually
O-4	Determined annually
O-3	Determined annually
O-2	100% of qualified ensigns

Promotion Zone Size: Per NCD, the number of officers in a promotion zone (the zone size) shall not be less than the number of selections planned, divided by the applicable opportunity of selection shown in the approved table. In cases where the results contain a fraction, the zone size will be rounded to the next higher number. For example, if six O-6 vacancies are to be filled, and 50% is the opportunity of selection, the zone size will be $6/.5 = 12$.

DISCUSSION:

There are specific workforce challenges that influence the FY2023 OCMP. The Coronavirus pandemic initially slowed the NOAA Corps attrition rate, but it is projected to return to the annual averages prior to the pandemic in FY2023. Decreased attrition during the pandemic slowed the rate of promotions, requiring officers to wait longer between promotions. Furthermore, decreased attrition during the Coronavirus pandemic reduced the need for time in grade waivers, reestablishing the precedent for officers to serve the necessary time in grade to solidify their experience at each grade.

The FY2023 enacted budget will enable the Corps to grow this year. This growth will address critical staffing gaps, while helping to right-size the demands currently placed on officers. Still, NOAA requires over 400 officers to fill current staffing shortages to include sustainably staffing NOAA ships and aircraft, increasing asset utilization rates to meet growing NOAA requirements, and staffing future aircraft and vessel acquisitions. The NOAA Corps funding line of OMAO’s budget does not yet allow for this number of officers. As at-sea and airborne requirements continue to increase, the need for more officers, especially those at senior officer levels, will become increasingly dire. OMAO is currently undertaking a broad analysis of NOAA Corps staffing needs to include the level of funding required for the optimal level of NOAA Corps officers within each grade and overall.

Grade distribution percentage adjustments give OMAO flexibility to adjust NOAA Corps growth across the grades as NOAA’s needs fluctuate, and increase. As the NOAA Corps grows, the need for more astute funding and staffing strategies increases. OMAO should consider rotational assignments, increased BOTC class sizes, use of ISTs, and other strategies that enable workforce growth, in alignment with diversity and inclusion initiatives. Furthermore, OMAO must be intentional with regards to efficient management of the NOAA Corps. career progression, assignments, retention strategies, and budget practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The OOS and zone sizes are established to ensure the NOAA Corps is managed as efficiently as possible to maintain an officer authorized and funded end strength, and meet grade distribution as approved by delegated authority to the Director, NOAA Corps and OMAO. These recommended zones meet the needs of the service in each grade for FY2023 and into FY2024.

Based on this analysis, the following actions are respectfully submitted for your approval:

- A. Zone Size and OOS. CPC recommends you approve the following zones and OOS for promotion to the next higher grade, and authorize the OPB not to exceed the number of officers recommended for selection. Zone size is rounded up to whole number.

To Be Grade	Board Date (on or about)	Zone Size	OOS Percentage	Select	TIG by Board Date
O-6	April 19, 2023	9	67%	6	4.71
O-5	April 19, 2023	14	71%	10	4.45
O-4	April 19, 2023	6	83%	5	4.46
O-3	April 19, 2023	11	91%	10	1.94
O-2	April 19, 2023	2	100% (if qualified)	2	2.29

Approved Date

Do Not Concur Date

B. Grade Distribution Percentages. CPC recommends the following grade distribution percentage for FY2023.

Grade	Percentage Recommendation	Number of Officers
O-6	8%	26
O-5	14%	46
O-4	20%	66
O-3	22%	73
O-2	18%	60
O-1	18%	60
Total Authorized	100%	331

 Approved Date Do Not Concur Date

C. BOTC 142, and 143. CPC recommends you approve the selection of up to 20 primary candidates and up to 30 alternate candidates for BOTC 142, and a selection of up to 20 primary candidates and up to 30 alternative candidates for BOTC 143.

 Approved Date Do Not Concur Date

D. Time-in-Grade Waivers. In accordance with NCD 04203(B), when the needs of the NOAA Corps require, the Director may adjust length of time-in-grade requirements, to the extent that time-in-grade requirements are not otherwise fixed by statute. CPC recommends approval of seven waivers for time-in-grade to expand the zone of eligible candidates for promotion within the zones of commander and lieutenant. With these waivers, commander positions will increase from 10 to 14 in zone, and lieutenant positions will increase from eight to 11 in zone.

 Approved Date Do Not Concur Date

- E. Board Schedule. CPC recommends approval of this schedule to hold the FY2023 promotion boards and for announcement to the officers in zone. Dates are approximate and may be adjusted so as not to impact the results of the FY2022 promotions.

Board Schedule	Board Date (on or about)
O-6 Selection	April 19, 2023
O-5 Selection	April 19, 2023
O-4 Selection	April 19, 2023
O-3 Selection	April 19, 2023
O-2 Selection	April 19, 2023

 Approved

 Date

 Do Not Concur

 Date

- F. Annual Review. CPC recommends performing a review of all officers below the grade of captain to assess career progression, performance, assignments, training, and overall health of the NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps. These reviews would occur bi-annually during odd numbered years.

 Approved

 Date

 Do Not Concur

 Date

- G. Annual Review of Captains. CPC recommends convening a board bi-annually to perform a captain review process. The board will review all active-duty captains, assessing performance, potential to serve in Flag positions, commitment to the service, training, and breadth of experience. A captain review board is necessary to ensure a cadre of officers to serve in leadership, including Flag, positions, and to maintain appropriate promotion opportunities in the NOAA Corps. Captain review boards will occur on even numbered years.

 Approved

 Date

 Do Not Concur

 Date

- H. Inter-Service Transfers. CPC recommends approval to select up to four inter-service transfers with transfer dates in FY2023, and up to four inter-service transfers with transfer dates in FY2024.

 Approved

 Date

 Do Not Concur

 Date

